

WHEN CONFLICTS ERUPT

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Welcome

Conflicts occur everyday. They can be as simple as one child taking another child's toy or as severe as one person accusing another person of stealing. Sometimes the actions we take during a conflict can result in arguments that affect the relationships we have with our family, friends, and co-workers. Both adults and children have difficulties dealing with conflicts in a healthy way. It is ok to become upset and angry during a situation but not ok to act on these feelings in a violent, aggressive manner.

Controlling anger and impulse are extremely difficult tasks for children and parents to learn. Many times children have difficulties dealing with situations that are frustrating, upsetting, and disappointing. Trying to remain calm during a conflict is not about holding back emotions, but being able to respond in a way that does not escalate the situation and result in violence.



Children who learn to cope with their emotions constructively not only have an easier time with disappointments, aggravation, and hurt feelings, but they also have an easier time relating to other children and adults at home, in school or child care, and on the playground (National Research Council and Institutes of Medicine, 2000). This is why it is extremely important as a parent to not only work on your conflict resolution skills but also help to teach your child how to resolve conflicts in positive ways. Some examples

of are modeling remaining calm, knowing when a situation will create conflict, preparing children for disappointing situations, recognizing and praising when children resolve conflict positively,

We hope that this newsletter will help in your quest to better conflict resolution for yourself and your child(ren). Enjoy!

Inside this issue:

Managing Anger	2
What to do When you are Angry	3
Conflict Resolution Tips	4
What Parents Can do When Children are Angry & Fight	5
Teaching by Example	6
The Turtle Technique	7

Special Points of Interest :

- Helping children express anger
- Wheel of Feelings
- Do you React or Respond?
- RETHINK
- IDEAL Model
- Being a Positive Role Model



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Managing Anger at Home

"Everyone experiences anger as a reaction to frustration or difficulty. Anger is an emotion that can tell us that something is wrong and unfair and needs changing. Teaching children to control and express anger in ways appropriate to their age and development is an important principle of early violence prevention. One of the primary ways of teaching young children is for adults to teach by example. Thus, adults need to learn how to control and express their own anger in nonviolent ways so their actions show young children how to behave."

<http://actagainstviolence.apa.org/anger/index.html>

Helping Children Express Anger



- 1 Use the Wheel of Feelings* to help your child learn about the different feelings and situations that cause them.**

- 2 Help your children find out what changes in their bodies when they are angry.**



- 3 Tell your children to always use words to show what they are feeling about people or a situation.**

- 4 Invent a situation where there is a fight or a conflict. Use dolls or stuffed animals to talk to your children about the situation and their feelings.**

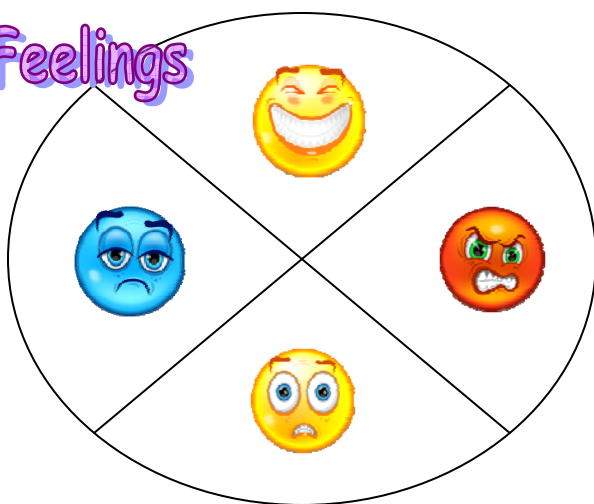
(*)SOURCE: PBS KIDS



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6

Wheel of Feelings



Ask your child to spin the spinner, and pretend to show the emotion where the spinner stops using his or her face, body, hands, legs, and voice. You could expand this by asking your child to make up a story about someone who feels that way.

If you keep the spinner handy, your child could use it to show how he or she is feeling any time of the day.

http://pbskids.org/rogers//parentsteachers/theme/1611_p_act.html

DO YOU REACT OR RESPOND?

React is...

When we act based on feelings without thinking

Respond is...

When we take time, calm down, think about the situation and what is the best action to take

What to Do When You Are Angry



1. Think before acting
2. Calm down
3. Use the **RETHINK** Steps:



Recognize what makes you angry.

Empathize with the other person's feelings.

Think of positive things about the situation.

Hear what the other person is saying to you.

Include "I" messages to tell how you feel.

Notice what happens to your body.

Keeep your attention on the present situation.



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3

Conflict Resolution Tips for Parents

- * **LISTEN FIRST**, then help your child negotiate a solution. Acknowledge your child's feelings about a conflict before helping to work out a solution
- * **USE POSITIVE** methods to discipline your child. Avoid yelling at him or her or using physical punishment. Through your example, your child will see that force is not the best or only choice.
- * **ESTABLISH RULES** for battles. Having guidelines in place, help children learn to resolve conflicts.
 - * Rules should include: NO hitting, NO biting, NO throwing objects, NO yelling at each other
 It's helpful if parents allow their children to make some of the rules, then post the written list in a common spot like the door of the refrigerator.



- * **AVOID INVOLVMENT** except when rules are broken. Intervene only when somebody breaks a rule and focus on the rule that the child broke not the conflict.
- * **AVOID TAKING SIDES**. Parents tend to side with the younger child. This is an open invitation for the youngster to use the tendency to his or her advantage and provoke a fight with a sibling. A more helpful way to teach conflict resolution
- * **TAKE ACTION** once a rule is broken. The first thing to do is separate the children involved. Either remove them or take away anything over which they were fighting - toys, books or food. None of the children should be allowed to "win" the object that caused the conflict.

- * **WEIGH POTENTIAL EXAGGERATIONS CAREFULLY**. Kids are often masters at sucking their parents into involvement in a conflict. They claim they've been bitten, kicked or even cut. Until you see a visible injury, don't believe it.
- * **GIVE** your child some special time each day. This may be really tough in today's busy world, but experts tell us that 20 minutes of positive adult attention per day dramatically reduces children's aggressive behavior.
- * **TEACH** your child to recognize the feelings of others. You can point out when someone is happy, sad, scared, worried, and so on. When children learn to recognize what someone else is feeling, they are better able to respond appropriately
- * **TEACH** your child to ask for attention constructively. Catch your child doing something right. Praise your child for doing well, rather than reprimanding him when mistakes are made..

What Parents Can Do When Children Are Angry and Fight



1. Help the children to calm down.

2. Separate the children.

3. Help the children to think about why they are angry.



4. Help each child think about what the other child is feeling.

5. Tell the children how you feel about the situation.



6. Help the children choose the best solution for the situation.

7. Praise the children when they resolve a conflict without violence.



8. Tell children it's ok to be angry, but not ok to hurt others.

How to Resolve Conflicts



The **IDEAL** Model helps both parents and children resolve conflicts in a more positive way. The concept of the **IDEAL** method is to stop and think about the conflict (to **RESPOND** not **REACT**!) **IDEAL** stands for:

I-Identify, D-Determine, E-Evaluate,
A-Act, L-Learn

Identify the problem and the feelings of everybody involved in the conflict.

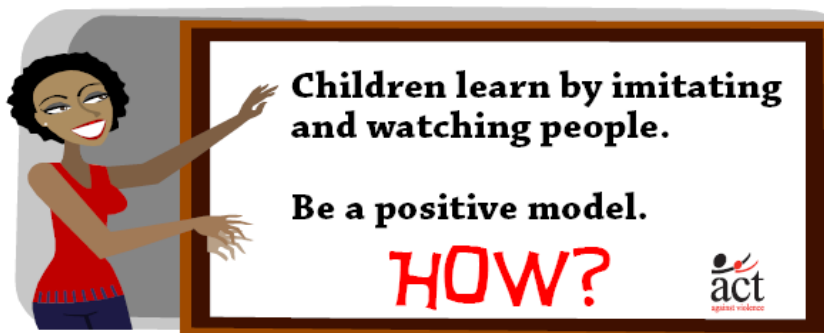
Determine possible alternative solutions.

Evaluate the alternative solutions.

Act, choosing the best solution.

Learn from what you did to solve the conflict.

Teaching By Example



Children learn by watching and imitating the world around them. That is why it is extremely important and parents to lead by example. Teach your children how to respond to conflict in appropriate ways. This may mean that you also need to work on how you manage your anger and solve conflicts, but remember...

YOU CAN DO IT!!!

- 1. Recognize when you are angry, frustrated, or just tired . . .**
- 2. Learn to manage your own stress and to control your anger . . .**
- 3. Talk to others about your feelings and ideas in a respectful way . . .**
- 4. Solve your problems and disputes using words, not violence . . .**
- 5. Talk to yourself aloud about a problem and a solution . . .**

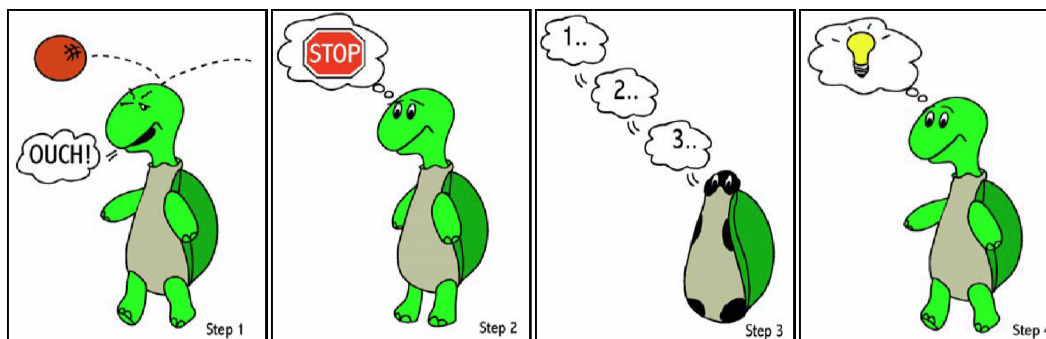


The Turtle Technique

Teaching children impulse control and anger management

The turtle technique is an anger management strategy that was originally developed to teach adults anger management skills then was adapted for preschool, kindergarten, and school age children. The basic steps of the turtle technique are:

- * Recognizing that you feel angry
- * Thinking "stop"
- * Going into your "shell" and taking three deep breaths and thinking calming, coping thoughts, "It was an accident. I can calm down and think of good solutions"
- * Coming out of your "shell" when calm and thinking of some solutions to the problem.



Praise Children for Using the Turtle

Super Turtle Award:

Create a certificate that is given out at the end of the day show that the child did a good job controlling their anger and impulses.



This Award Certifies That

Was Caught Remaining Calm During an Upsetting Situation

"Turtle Power" Necklace:

Create a beaded necklace with a turtle on it and give it to the child to wear for the day indicating they were able to remain calm in an upsetting situation.



"Turtle Token Jar":

Every time you catch your child remaining calm and handling disappointment you can place a turtle token (ex. green beads) in a clear jar (ex. peanut butter container). When the jar is full your child can have a special treat.



"Turtle Sticker Chart":

Each time a child is caught remaining calm in an upsetting or disappointing situation, put a turtle sticker on the chart. Once the child fills up the chart they earn a special treat.

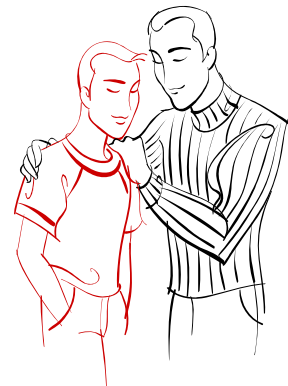


**ADULTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER (ACT)
AGAINST VIOLENCE PARENTS RAISING
SAFE KIDS**

1 Smithfield St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: 412-350-2770
E-mail: safestart@alleghenycounty.us



Office of Community Ser-
vices
Safe Start Program



ACT

ACT Parents Raising Safe Kids, is an anti-violence program that educates communities and families on how to raise children without violence. The focus is to help parents learn ways to create safe, healthy environments that protect children and youth from violence.

The Allegheny County Safe Start Program

Safe Start is an outreach program which supports and assists families to provide safe, nurturing care for children. Through the use of a family and neighborhood based approach, Safe Start seeks to reduce exposure to and the negative impact of violence by identifying and supporting parents and young children within communities affected by violence.



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Find more about ACT on the web at:
<http://actagainstviolence.apa.org/>

Find more about Safe Start on the web at:
<http://alleghenycountypa.gov/dhs/safestart.aspx?terms=safe+start>